INTERNET TOOLS for Planning, Conservation & Environmental Protection

Article 11

In an effort to increase awareness of Internet-based resources available to local governments and citizen planners, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has initiated a technical assistance program focused on Internet tools for planning, conservation, and environmental protection. This program has been made possible by a water quality management grant awarded to the WDNR by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

As part of our technical assistance program we have developed this series of articles. **Each article will highlight a different tool, discuss its possible uses, and offer step-by-step tutorials.** It is our hope that the information provided here will insure that all involved in local planning processes have equal access to valuable information and analysis tools. Gaining access to these free Internet-based planning tools will assist communities with preliminary selection of alternative approaches to watershed and community planning. When community planners, developers, and citizens have access to similar information they are more readily able to interact and jointly discover possible solutions to land use issues.

This series of articles can be found online at **http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/landuse/CompTools/local.htm**

Internet Tools for Finding and Accessing Data

Tools for finding and accessing data give users access to a wide range of shared information. Many of the tools in this category serve as portals allowing users the ability to obtain demographic, geographic, environmental, and other data from multiple sources across the Internet. These portals give the user the ability to create a more comprehensive picture of their local community.

We will be looking at two tools for finding and accessing data, one federal and one state. As with all the tools we promote with our technical assistance program, there is no cost to use either of these tools or the data they contain.

Geospatial One-Stop
www.geodata.gov

Geospatial One-Stop was launched in 2001 by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as an e-government initiative to make it "easier, faster, and less expensive" to access geospatial information. This web portal provides the tools to facilitate the sharing of geospatial information, improve planning for future investments in geospatial data, and expand collaborative partnerships that help leverage investments and reduce duplication. Geospatial One-Stop can help facilitate long-term collaboration related to transportation planning, social services, regional planning and environmental protection.

Currently, users of the Geospatial One-Stop can search three content categories: data, documents, and resources. Each category has a number of content types. Users can search the category if they want to download, order, or add data or map services directly to a map. In the documents category, users can search for map files, static map images, or geographic information. Users can also search under resources for links to external websites, data clearinghouses, GIS-based web applications, and geographic activities.

Wisconsin Land Information Clearinghouse
http://www.sco.wisc.edu/wisclinc/

Another tool for finding and accessing data is the Wisconsin Land Information Clearinghouse (WISCLINC). Maintained by the State Cartographer's Office, WISCLINC is intended to be a starting point and navigation aid to those searching for spatial data in Wisconsin. It is a portal to land information websites, geospatial data, viewable map services, and more. WISCLINC is also a part of a network of National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) nodes which contribute to the progress of federal initiatives such as Geospatial One-Stop.

WISCLINC is broken into five categories that users can explore: Geodata Catalog, WiscMap, County Land Information Survey, Tools and How To's, and Clearinghouse Research. The **Geodata Catalog** allows users the ability to search by county or themes (e.g., agriculture, climate, environment, etc.) for resources such as geospatial data, interactive maps, and agency websites. **WiscMap** is an interactive mapping application that draws upon geospatial data from distributed online sources and integrates them into a single view. **County Land Information Survey** gives the status of county land

information in Wisconsin by providing links to past Wisconsin Land Information Program Survey results.

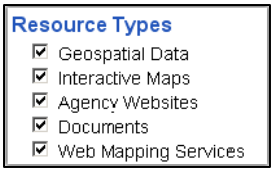
To use WISCLINC

Using your Internet browser, go to **http://www.sco.wisc.edu/wisclinc/**

Click “GeoData Catalog.” To begin your search, either use the County Map to jump directly to a county’s data, or use the Search Menu on the left for a more specific search.

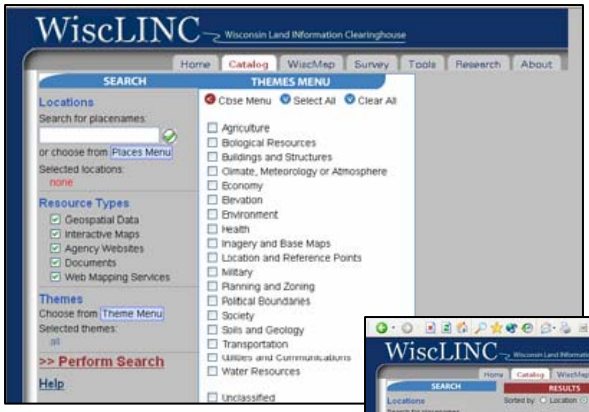
To search for data by location, enter the placename and select a municipality, or click on the “Places Menu” and choose your target search areas from the list.

Information can be searched for based on location, resource type, or theme. By default, search parameters include all types and themes. To narrow your search, remove unwanted data types or themes.



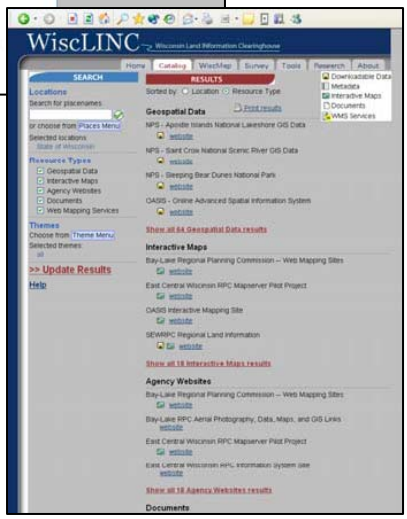
Choose the resource types you want to include in your search.

Choose the themes you would like to be included (or not included) in the search by clicking on the “Themes Menu.”



Select “Perform Search” to view search results.

Once the search results are displayed, the icons at the left of each record show the data type available.



Clicking on the links will direct you to the publisher’s website, an online application, a document, or a data download page.

For More Information:

Visit WDNR’s land use website
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/science/landuse

Midwest Spatial Decision Support System Partnership

www.epa.gov/waterspace

Article prepared by Dan Bellrichard
Bureau of Integrated Science Services
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource
PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921